

SPECIAL EVENTS

*The Faculty of Music,
University of Toronto
Concert Hall,
Edward Johnson Building*

The Amadeus Quartet

*Norbert Brainin, violin
Peter Schidlof, viola*

*Siegmund Nissel, violin
Martin Lovett, cello*

*November 9th, 1967
8:30 p.m.*

Program

QUARTET IN C MAJOR, OP. 76, No. 3 ('Emperor') - - - - Haydn

Allegro

Poco adagio cantabile

Minuet: Allegro

Finale: Presto

The *Emperor's Hymn*, "Gott erhalte Franz den Kaiser" ("God protect the Emperor Franz"), heard in the second movement of this Quartet, was composed by Haydn in 1797. He was commissioned, together with the poet Haschka, to write an Austrian national hymn worthy of standing beside England's much-admired "God Save the King." Haydn is said to have adapted the melody from a Croatian folk tune. The anthem has been in official use in Austria ever since that time; in 1918 at the founding of the Republic of Austria, a new text was written, "Sei gesegnet ohne Ende" ("Be thou blessed eternally"). In Germany from 1841 through the 1930s it was sung to the words, "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles." Many Christian churches still include the tune in their hymnals, usually identifying it as *Austria*. It has supported in this form a variety of different texts. Its suitability to religious expression is shared by many classical slow movements: one recalls the familiar hymn-tune adaptations of the Adagio from Haydn's own Symphony No. 88 as just one other instance of this, out of many. Simple nobility of musical expression, achieved so remarkably in the hymn, carries over to other parts of this Quartet as well, suggesting that the whole work was a kind of comment on the particular aspirations to greater human dignity that personal patriotism involved in the late 18th century.

The first movement introduces a brief memorable leading-motive right at the start which gathers to it a vast amount of comment including "hunting-horn" harmonies, martial counter-tunes, all manner of quasi-fugal involvements, and even a dialogue of cuckoos. The hymn appears first of all in a plain setting clarifying its five-phrase pattern of a-a-b-c-c. There follow four variations, each of the instruments taking the hymn melody in turn, in the order second violin, cello, viola, first violin. Variation 1 is a duet for the violins, the first encircling the second's melody with a tracery of decorative patterns. Variation 2 brings out the tenor register of the cello. Variation 3 places the viola in the centre of an ever-shifting contrapuntal situation. Variation 4 gives the original tune some minor-key shadings; after a flight into the upper registers of all instruments, the music descends and lingers tellingly in a brief added phrase.

Unusually, the minuet and trio show a motivic relationship. The trio reveals subtle treatments of mode (minor to major and vice-versa) and phrase-length, which, together with the motivic reminiscences of the minuet proper, bring deeper heart (and brain) challenges than the conventional formal dance-music patterns of the minuet might at first suggest. The finale develops not (as so often with Haydn) in terms of bumptious rustic comedy but rather as wise and urbane human comment. It opens with majestic minor-key music, punctuated with thoughtful pauses and filled with noble passion. Towards the end it turns to the joy of C major again.

QUARTET IN D MAJOR (K. 499) - - - - - Mozart

Allegretto

Menuetto: Allegretto

Adagio

Allegro

This work is often called the 'Hoffmeister' quartet, after Franz Anton Hoffmeister, a composer two years Mozart's senior, and one of Mozart's few really close musical friends, who was also the owner of a publishing-house in Vienna. He often used to lend sums of money, which Mozart would repay by writing music. This Quartet is essentially just such a potboiler — although there are no signs of haste or lack of care in the writing of it: on the contrary, it achieves just as high a degree of perfection in detail and expression as any of the earlier Opus X quartets, and, as Einstein remarks, it certainly justifies the unusual procedure of separate publication (rather than inclusion in a normal set of three or six quartets). One feature which shows a new strength and independence in Mozart's chamber music style is the way the outer movements exploit to the full their opening themes, using them, developing them, and constantly revealing new meaning in them.

The first movement has an unusual lay-out to its themes. The first begins in octaves, and has a counter-statement in which the instruments alternate in pairs. The main motif later grows into a canon between first violin and cello. In the second theme, Mozart skilfully dodges the finality of the dominant cadence by inserting 'surprise' phrases, the first in F sharp minor, and the other, more extended, in F major. The whole exposition is exceptionally broad, and rich in harmony, and the main motif is rarely lost sight of.

The Minuet is shorter and more dance-like than usual with Mozart. Some inner chromaticisms and fine harmonic variants in the theme suggest hidden depths. The trio reveals brilliant sonorous possibilities in the quartet medium. Alfred Einstein calls it 'a piece of musical wizardry'. It leads directly into the repeated Minuet, a detail rare in Mozart.

The Adagio is constructed in long, highly ornamental melodic phrases. The opening theme, characteristically punctuated with tiny expressive pauses, is heard again immediately, played by the two lower instruments in thirds, with a lovely new countertheme above; later it is treated in double canon. The second theme is dominated by a little figure of four 16th-notes, with Mozart's bowing marks indicating a stress on the first, a legato between the first and second, and light separation of the other two: such details of craft enhance pure inspiration, and are in a sense themselves inspired.

The finale has a wispy, hesitant, main theme, whose rests are later filled out by the superposition of a broad countertheme. There is considerable harmonic daring; and the development is highly contrapuntal. However the character of the main theme forbids any abandon or general exuberance of spirit. Mozart is perhaps more himself in this finale than in those where he follows Haydn's example.

— INTERMISSION —

STRING QUARTET IN A MINOR, OPUS 29 - - - - - Schubert

*Allegro ma non troppo**Andante**Menuetto and Trio: Allegretto**Allegro moderato*

With the Quartet movement in C minor, written in 1820, Schubert left the merely sociable and entertaining music of his first dozen string quartets to search for a style more personal and more serious; in the A minor Quartet, written four years later at the age of 27, the transformation is completed. Together with the Quartets in D minor and G major and the Quintet in C major it represents Schubert's mature chamber music for string instruments. It is distinguished from its companion works by a tender dreaminess and delicacy of sound all its own. But underlying its romantic, songful melodies, its ravishing harmonies and colourful modulations which create the impression of richness and abundance, one finds, almost paradoxically, a classical perfection of formal proportions and an astonishing economy of basic thematic material. It is Schubert's technique of completely changing the emotional character of a motive by changing its dynamics, phrasing or harmony, and of using the same germ to spin ever new melodic ideas, that creates the feeling of abundance of ideas.

Take the two main themes of the first movement; the germ of the first, a downward triad of three notes, the germ of the second three tones of an upward scale (with a trill on the second). Both appear in double roles. At their first appearance they are spun out into gentle melodies of enticing sweetness, but after a short while, each is transformed into music of an aggressive and determined character. Indeed, it is this interplay of lyrical and robust passages, with the balance in favour of the former, that nourishes the structure of the whole movement. Besides the two simple germ motives referred to, the accompaniment figure of the opening two bars, which sets the mood, and a rolling triplet figure which adds some contrapuntal interest, make up the entire thematic material. If one passage in the treatment of these materials should be singled out for its haunting beauty, it is that which follows after a climactic loud ending in the development section, when the three lower parts intone the rhythmic accompaniment figure with the first violin soaring above, accomplishing a gradual relaxation of tension and return to the recapitulation.

The second movement presents a well-known theme from Schubert's *Rosamunde* in a structure alternating, in the words of one biographer, between episodes of pastoral calm and virile agitation.

The juxtaposition of the aristocratic and poetic menuet and the naïvely happy trio emphasizes another prominent feature of the work as a whole: the alternation of A minor and A major, with a constant "pull" from the former to the latter. The major tonality wins out in the finale which abandons some of the dreamlike quality of the previous movements. But with all its "Hungarian" flavour, gaiety and caprice, and its quickened pulse, the finale still forms part of the unity of the work as a whole.

Program notes by John Beckwith and Helmut Kallmann